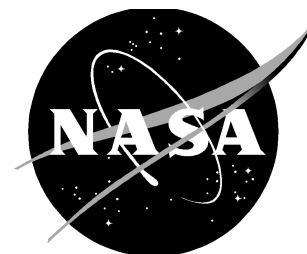


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Langley Research Center
Hampton, Virginia 23681-2199



Kimberly W. Land
(757) 864-9885
k.w.land@larc.nasa.gov

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Confidential Incident Reporting and Human Error in Healthcare

The U.S. Institute of Medicine estimates that medical errors result in about 45,000-100,000 deaths each year. This compares with 43,000 road traffic accident deaths. The medical treatment for patients who suffer these “adverse medical events” costs about \$15 billion. According to Chris Johnson at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, these statistics hide the personal stories of patients and their relatives who must come to terms with the consequences of their treatment rather than their illness.

Johnson, Professor of Computing Science, University of Glasgow, Scotland, will speak on “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Incident Reporting Systems” at a colloquium at 2 p.m., Tuesday, August 13, at NASA Langley's H.J.E. Reid Conference Center.

Media Briefing: A media briefing will be held at 1:15 p.m. at the H.J.E. Reid Conference Center, 14 Langley Blvd., at NASA Langley Research Center. Members of the media who wish to attend should contact Kimberly W. Land at (757) 864-9885 for credentials.

Confidential incident reporting systems have been widely proposed as a means of eliciting information about previous failures. Via such systems, nurses and doctors submit reports about incidents or “near misses” without blame or retribution.

Johnson will describe a range of techniques that have been developed and applied to help monitor incident reporting systems in the rail, aviation, and healthcare industries in the United Kingdom. He will also give an overview of the incidents reported in UK and US systems, and will conclude the talk with a description of the limitations of existing reporting schemes, by introducing a range of techniques that address these problems.

At the University of Glasgow, Johnson heads a research group that focuses on the investigation and reporting of technological failure in safety critical systems. He has master degrees from the Universities of Cambridge and York.

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